



Sample School Projects

INTRODUCTION

Below are five project ideas to get you started in the creation and development of your school project. While you may choose to use any of these ideas, they ideally should be used as springboards to guide you in developing your own activities. We have kept them broad so that you and your school can work out the details. Keep in mind that these projects should be ongoing throughout the school year and include strong goals and deliverables. Projects can be multi-disciplinary. We encourage you to partner with local community organizations. Screenings must take place in the school, but other project activities may take place in the community at your partners' locations. Be aware that many of these projects may have overlapping focuses both in the rights they are examining as well as in the resources that they use. In order to help students explore issues that are specific to themselves and to children's/human rights, one must first explore the basic similarities and common needs of all people. The study of basic human rights is crucial. For a lesson plan example, look at *Wide Angle* lesson plans/human rights, found at www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle.

Things to keep in mind:

- Include pre-activities such as previewing programs, identifying relevant vocabulary, and creating goals.
- Educate yourself about your audience and your community.
- Create a timeline for project goals and decide how you will meet them.
- Assign responsibilities to your project team.
- Implement your project, making sure to keep copies of photos, evaluations, agendas, posters and flyers, etc.
- Complete final report, including the materials you created and used in your project as well as all items listed on Page 55.

Web Resources:

- www.thirteen.org
- www.pbs.org
- www.pbs.org/pov
- www.itvs.org

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This Declaration guarantees the rights of all people and encompasses a broad spectrum of economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights, especially as they apply to the rights of women, children and minorities.



Sample School Projects

We urge you to familiarize yourself with this document (www.un.org/Overview/rights.html), apply the human rights framework to issues in the United States, your state and your community, and recognize and support human rights in your daily life. Here are examples of how you can do it:

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Potential Focus:

- Freedom of Belief and Religion
- Freedom of Movement
- Freedom of Expression

PBS Program Ideas:

- *P.O.V.: Family Fundamentals*
- *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly: Reconciliation in Rwanda*
- *Wide Angle: The Rock Star and the Mullahs*

Brief Description of Focus:

These programs bring together top experts in their respective fields for discussions on the Bible's first book, incorporating contemporary issues such as racism, the role of women, dysfunctional families, and environmental responsibility into the same forum as the eternal debates about the nature of faith, the right to an education, poverty, and other civil political rights issues.

Project Ideas:

- Using the *Wide Angle* Academic Controversy model, form an ongoing classroom, school, or intergenerational debate.
- Study and research Human Rights declarations or conventions, then as a classroom or school develop your own declaration or convention. Have panel discussions with students, faculty, and/or community members.
- Create a Web site featuring items such as a digital photo album, testimonials, or bulletin board.

SOCIAL ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Potential Focus:

- Freedom of Expression
- Freedom of Belief and Religion
- Right to Participate in Cultural Life of Community



Sample School Projects

PBS Program Ideas:

- *American Experience: The Murder of Emmett Till*
- *Wide Angle: The Rock Star and the Mullahs*
- *Jazz: A Film by Ken Burns*

Brief Description of Focus:

Music has always been used as a vehicle to inspire social change. Hip-hop is becoming a driving force in the political world. Recently, Russell Simmons organized a Hip-Hop Summit to get hip-hop artists and the entertainment industry to take back responsibility in addressing the serious issues surrounding hip-hop as a culture – a culture that has grown into an international lifestyle promoting certain values and ethics. This industry is taking greater strides at being accountable for the social, political, and economic impact the music has on society at large. From Simmons: “Not many people in hip-hop realize that they are more powerful than the politicians, and they're more powerful than any other cultural influence and that they have the power to change the world in any way they decide.”

Project Ideas:

- Research and present the origins of a specific music or art movement exploring how it has been used as a vehicle to create social change. Compare and contrast different movements in history. Look at individual songs and artists and the impact they made.
- Develop an event featuring live performance, poetry, educational displays, photography and art exhibits, etc. Put donations towards a cause.
- Explore protest songs or songs that were written about specific Human Rights violations, such as Bob Dylan’s “The Death of Emmett Till,” “Hurricane,” and “The Lonesome Deathe of Hattie Carroll.” Create and perform songs inspired by events that are relevant today. (Open to all mediums, artists, and genres.)

WOMEN’S RIGHTS

Potential Focus:

- Right to Education
- Right to Equality
- Right to Equality before the Law

PBS Program Ideas:

- *FRONTLINE/World: Nigeria – The Road North*
- *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly: Taliban & Women*



Sample School Projects

- *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*: American Muslim Women

Brief Description of Focus:

In the West, the image of the veiled Muslim woman has come to symbolize Islam's oppression of women. Do women hold an inferior position in Muslim society? Can equality for women only be fostered in societies governed by secular laws as opposed to Islamic law? These are the questions that the Muslim societies grapple with. Do women hold an inferior position in the United States?

Project Ideas:

- Create small documentary teams. Produce documentaries concentrating on injustices, either past or present.
- Interview males and females in your school or women from several generations to gather information about differing educational or cultural experiences.
- Collect oral histories.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Potential Focus:

- Right to Education
- Freedom from Discrimination
- Right to Equality

PBS Program Ideas:

- *Wide Angle: Growing Up Global*
- *FRONTLINE/World: India: - Hole in the Wall*
- *P.O.V.: Fear and Learning at Hoover Elementary*

Brief Description of Focus:

Internationally, over a hundred million children have never been enrolled in school. One in four does not complete five years of basic education. Yet in the United States there is a similar epidemic of drop-outs and failure to gain a basic literacy rate.

Project Ideas:

- Working with a library, set up a mentoring program. Start a reading or computer program to help young children or the elderly in the community to develop skills.
- Set up a refugee families' support network: include a letter writing campaign, in-school literacy center, and resources.



Sample School Projects

- Promote dialogue about standardized testing. Include panel discussions and intergenerational debates. Start a letter writing campaign to the Board of Regents or branches of the Department of Education including research on the federally mandated “No Child Left Behind” Act.

MINORITY RIGHTS

Potential Focus:

- Right to Own Property
- Right to Free Movement in and out of the Country
- Right to Life, Liberty and Personal Security

PBS Program Ideas:

- *Wide Angle: Dying to Leave*
- *Wide Angle: Soul of India*
- *P.O.V.: Discovering Dominga*

Brief Description of Focus:

Many immigrants come to the US with expectations of a better standard of living than in their own countries. But many families have a difficult time integrating into communities with customs different than their own. There are indeed success stories – but these occur mainly when there is help from the community. Minority families within countries also struggle with cultural identity and national identity within ethnically diverse societies.

Project Ideas:

- Research a country at civil war. Find statistics on the number of people trying to leave. How many are leaving legally with governmental support? How many are leaving illegally? What is the immigration policy of the country? How does that compare to the United States? Discuss issues such as human cargo, bonded labor, and human trafficking.
- Write and present a play or performance (poetry slam) that illustrates the immigration issues in your community.
- Organize a cultural festival, featuring music, dance, food, artwork, etc. from various countries.